

Six Months and \$154.6 Million Later, Eastern Kentucky Recovery Continues

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FRANKFORT, Ky – Six months after disastrous floods swept through Eastern Kentucky leaving a path of devastation across 13 counties, FEMA, its federal partners and the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management (KYEM) are still hard at work collaborating to help Kentucky communities and survivors jump-start their recovery.

This partnership resulted in FEMA/Commonwealth teams providing door-to-door aid to survivors where they live, the removal of mountains of debris from creeks and public rights of way, and the organization of what is sure to be the fastest property acquisition program in FEMA history.

As of Jan. 22, more than \$154.6 million has been approved in FEMA grants and low interest disaster loans to help survivors begin to recover from the floods.

- FEMA Individuals and Households Program: More than \$96.9 Million
 - Housing Assistance: More than \$83.7 million
 - Other Needs Assistance: More than \$13.1 million
- U.S. Small Business Administration: More than \$57.7 million

In addition, Public Assistance (PA) funding to assist communities by reimbursing costs for repair has topped more than \$3 million.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has closed 461 claims totaling more than \$24.6 million in payments. For those insured with the NFIP, insurance payments can help restore a home to its pre-disaster condition, provide for lost personal property and speed up the recovery process.

The Commonwealth and FEMA Hard at Work

- Soon after the disaster was declared, Disaster Survivor Assistance teams visited more than 24,000 homes and individuals to offer guidance on the



recovery process, assist with applications for federal assistance, and to help those who already applied to complete and submit required paperwork. Special teams comprised of FEMA, commonwealth and local representatives were also on the ground to meet survivors where they lived and help them apply for disaster assistance.

- FEMA and the Commonwealth opened eight Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) to meet with disaster survivors face-to-face and assist them in accessing federal and Commonwealth programs to help in their recovery. Throughout the recovery, more than 17,000 visits to the DRCs were facilitated. As these centers closed, the Commonwealth transitioned many of them into Multi-Agency Resource Centers as a means of continuing to provide face-to-face assistance to Kentuckians.
- On Sept. 22, Gov. Beshear signed an Executive Order to establish the Council for Community Recovery and Resiliency (CCRR). The CCRR was established as an advisory and resource body attached to the KYEM and made up of members whose agencies provide financial and technical assistance to local community recovery and resiliency planning teams across the Commonwealth. This council, in combination with the local recovery teams, establishes a National Disaster Recovery Framework mirror structure at the Commonwealth and local level to better facilitate the flow of resources and support to communities.
- The Commonwealth has continued to provide temporary shelter for affected families through its Commonwealth Sheltering Program.
 - To date, this program has assisted 391 Kentucky families. A total of 1,027 people have been sheltered in hotels and travel trailers. Additionally, 360 people have been provided shelter through the Commonwealth's partnership with Kentucky state parks.
 - Currently, 235 survivor families are being sheltered in 240 travel trailers.
 - 25 people continue to shelter in state parks. Kentucky State Parks employees continue to work with local and state emergency management to actively transition affected families into long-term housing solutions.
 - Participants in this program may also be eligible for FEMA Direct Temporary Housing. Federal collaboration with the Commonwealth assures that all housing options for displaced survivors will be utilized.
- While it can typically take many months for FEMA Direct Temporary Housing to be activated and put in place KYEM — in close collaboration with FEMA Direct Housing and Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) — was able to



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assemble a temporary housing mission in a little over one month. The first family was licensed in by early September. Direct Temporary Housing is the last option for housing. It is available in six counties (Breathitt, Floyd, Knott, Letcher Perry and Pike) that the Commonwealth identified as having a lack of rental resources.

- Currently there are 81 households in temporary housing units in 5 counties.
- To date, 9 families have moved out of Direct Temporary Housing and located permanent housing.
- Sometimes the best way to avoid future flood damage is to rebuild outside of the floodplain. This can be achieved through property acquisition. Acquisition programs often take years to implement, but not in Kentucky. The first contract to acquire a flood-prone property was signed on Jan. 11. The speed at which Kentucky and FEMA were able to put this program in place was due to the Commonwealth's willingness to work fast and think "outside the box."
 - FEMA's IRC and Mitigation continue to coordinate closely with eligible counties to identify resources to assist with their property acquisition programs.
 - The property acquisition program is FEMA funded and state managed. To date, FEMA has awarded five projects at a total cost of more than \$5.8 million for the state to acquire 27 properties.
- FEMA's Public Assistance Program (PA) provides funds to the Commonwealth, which in turn provides reimbursement to the local governments, counties and certain types of private nonprofit applicants to help them pay for damaged infrastructure such as roads and schools and to defray the costs of response activities. Twenty Eastern Kentucky counties are eligible for PA.
 - To date, more than 200 requests for Public Assistance have been filed, resulting in approximately 5,000 site inspections across Eastern Kentucky. The purpose of a site inspection is to validate disaster-related damage and determine what steps will need to be taken to restore a facility to its pre-disaster condition.
 - PA is a cost-sharing program. FEMA reimburses applicants no less than 75 percent of their eligible costs, with the remainder covered by a non-federal source.
 - FEMA authorized a 100 percent federal cost share for debris removal and emergency protective measures—including direct federal assistance—for a continuous 30-day period of the Commonwealth's choosing within the first 120 days of the Eastern Kentucky floods.



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- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) engineers have assessed nearly 1,100 county and state-owned bridges and identified 100 in need of replacement. To date, 29 bridges have been replaced, 14 have been repaired and 42 temporary crossings have been completed.
- One of the biggest successes in Kentucky has been debris removal. KYTC has removed more than 480,000 tons of storm debris from roadsides and waterways while also clearing 606 miles of creeks and streams of storm and vegetative debris.
- In Kentucky, Voluntary Agency Liaisons are helping establish long-term recovery groups to provide a wide range of assistance to disaster survivors, the Commonwealth and local partners. Long-term recovery groups typically include federal partners, community members, voluntary agencies and grassroots organizations that work in close coordination to address community needs, distribute resources and help restore vital support systems. To date seven Long-Term Recovery Groups have been organized in seven counties: Breathitt, Clay, Floyd, Knott, Perry, Letcher and Pike.

The Basics of Federal Assistance

On July 29, 2022, President Biden declared a major disaster declaration for Eastern Kentucky which included 13 counties for assistance to individuals and households, and 20 counties for assistance to communities and certain private nonprofits to aid in their recovery.

Assistance to individuals and households may include financial awards to help pay for temporary housing, replacement of personal property, and medical, dental and other short-term needs to support their recovery. FEMA assistance is designed to meet a survivor's basic needs. It will not fully compensate someone for the loss of their home and personal property. Additionally, FEMA cannot duplicate assistance from other sources such as insurance. Through our partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration, disaster loans can also provide a critical source of funding to help survivors get their homes back to pre-disaster condition.

Through its Public Assistance program, FEMA provides for communities by reimbursing the cost of repairing infrastructure such as roads and bridges, emergency response and cleaning up the voluminous amounts of debris. To date the Commonwealth has picked up almost half a million tons of debris from the roads and waterways. The cost of this work will be fully or partially reimbursed



through the PA program.

FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons support the significant contributions of voluntary, faith-based, and community stakeholders active in disaster by building relationships – and coordinating efforts – with and across partner organizations and government agencies. Voluntary agencies pick up where federal assistance ends, providing help with the unmet needs of disaster survivors and communities.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is designed to provide funding to strengthen structures and infrastructure during rebuilding, which can prevent or lessen potential damage from future natural disasters. Funds are available throughout the Commonwealth, with projects prioritized by the KYEM through its enhanced mitigation plan.

As communities look to the future, the Interagency Recovery Coordination group coordinates activities from several federal agencies, local universities and philanthropic organizations. This support helps access other funding sources and technical support to help fill in the gaps not covered by FEMA funding, utilizing the “whole community” recovery model to help communities recover from disasters.

For the latest information on Kentucky flooding recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4663 and follow FEMA on Twitter at twitter.com/FEMARegion4. Visit the Governor’s website at governor.ky.gov/disaster-response/flood-response.

